

OCT 23 1965

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP

# Fulbright Denounces Johnson 'Consensus'

By David Wise

Washington Bureau Chief  
WASHINGTON.

Sen. William Fulbright yesterday strongly defended his right to dissent from the Administration policy in the Dominican Republic and, by implication, he attacked President Johnson's whole concept of a national "consensus."

"In so far as it represents a genuine reconciliation of differences, a consensus is a fine thing," the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee declared. "In so far as it represents the concealment of differences, it is a miscarriage of democratic procedure."

The Arkansas Democrat said he did not "take kindly" to the charge that he gave "aid and comfort" to the enemies of the United States by his speech Sept. 15 opposing U. S. intervention in the Dominican Republic. The speech aroused a storm of controversy, with Sen. Thomas Dodd, D., Conn., leading the opposition to Sen. Fulbright.

Much of the criticism at the time centered on whether the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee should dissent from the government's policy, since his words carry special weight and could be interpreted abroad, some critics claimed, as evidence of disagreement in the U. S.

It was understood that Sen. Fulbright was deeply disturbed by the attacks upon him after his Dominican speech, and wanted yesterday to answer those who argued he had no right to speak out.

"Much of the discussion, I have noted to my surprise," he said on the floor yesterday, "has been about me rather than about the Dominican Republic and Latin America.... Our country is still strong enough to survive an occasional dissenting view, even though the consensus is virtually unanimous."



Associated Press

Sen. Fulbright

He added:

"An interesting discussion could be developed as to whether it is my criticisms of the United States policy in the Dominican Republic or the policy itself which has given 'aid and comfort' to our enemies."

Then he delivered his warning on the concept of a "consensus" that could stifle dissent, adding: "I think we Americans tend to put too high a value on unanimity—on bipartisanship in foreign policy, on politics stopping at the water's edge, on turning a single face to the world—as if there were something dangerous and illegitimate about honest differences of opinion honestly expressed by honest men."

"Probably because we have been united about so many things for so long, including the basic values of our free society, we tend to be mistrustful of intellectual dissent, confusing it with personal hostility and political disloyalty."

In his Sept. 15 speech Sen. Fulbright said that U. S. actions in the Dominican Republic, where President Johnson intervened with Marines on April 28, had been characterized "by a lack of candor."

He said President Johnson had received "faulty advice"

and "exaggerated estimates of Communist influence" in the rebel movement that overthrew the Dominican government. The danger to American lives was "more a pretext than a reason" for U. S. intervention, he said in September. The real reason, he said was to prevent "another Cuba" in Santo Domingo.

President Johnson initially announced he was sending in Marines to save American lives. Four days later, he said for the first time that the revolt had been "really seized" by "Communist conspirators." The New York Herald Tribune reported on April 28, however, that concern over Communist influence in the rebel movement, as well as concern over U. S. citizens in Santo Domingo, had prompted the troop intervention.

Yesterday, Sen. Fulbright said he did "not like taking a public position criticizing a Democratic administration which in most respects I strongly support. But the Senator, who held lengthy hearings on U. S. actions in the Dominican crisis, said the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee has "a special obligation" to speak out, particularly since "the political opposition, whose function it is to criticize, was simply not doing so."

Because Republicans approved of the President's actions, he said, U. S. policy was carried out "without controversy, without debate, without review."

"Far from being the danger many of us make it out to be," he said, "responsible dissent is one of the great strengths of democracy." He said that 90 per cent of his mail had shared his concern over U. S. actions.

"Many of the letters I received expressed concern about the role of the Department of Defense and the role of the Central Intelligence Agency in the conduct of American foreign policy," he added.